



The Messenger

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From Pastor Telloni . . .

Perhaps you are familiar with the story of Cornelius the Roman centurion, recorded in the 10th Chapter of the Book of Acts (*read the whole chapter*). He is best known as one of the “Gentiles” who were converted to Christianity after Pentecost and the kickoff of the Apostolic mission to “*make disciples of all nations, by baptizing ... [and] teaching them ..*” First, Cornelius, like a number of Roman citizens, adopted the Jewish faith before becoming a Christian. St. Luke, the author of Acts, called him “*a devout man who feared God with all his household.*” This term, “*with all his household,*” is an important trait in order to understand this upstanding man. Cornelius was not just a “*devout*” individual.



St. Luke is specific in identifying him as the head of a household, a true “*patriarch,*” a “*family*” man, but he was also a family “*man.*” In Roman society, a family man, or “*paterfamilias,*” was responsible for everything to do with his wife and children, his children’s wives and children, his servants, and even his extended family. He was an important leader and protector of all, because Roman life was based on the family. This is the understanding of the words St. Luke uses as he identifies Cornelius as “*a devout man who feared God with all his household.*”

Now, when Peter and Cornelius met, the Roman “*familia*” was falling on hard times and breaking down. The fabric of Roman society, starting with heinous emperors, was tattered due to such factors as confusions about sex and self-control, such as separation of sex and marriage, widespread divorce, declining birthrates, and tolerance of perverse forms of erotic experiences.

This sounds like the United States in the 21st century, doesn’t it?

Cornelius and other like-minded individuals were appalled at this sorry state of affairs crushing the traditional framework of *familia*, along with the traditional Jewish family structure, based in the Scriptures, and so they were drawn to Israel’s customs.

Well, yes, the “*family*” was the first institution created by God in the beginning. It is the undergirding structure of creation itself. In Genesis God’s initial command, announced immediately after creating man and woman, was to “*increase and multiply.*” Yes, build a family within the institution of marriage, mandated by a strong and loving God.



Cornelius and his comrades would hear the good words about work and caring for their families. And with Cornelius’ conversion to Jesus Christ, he appealed to Peter to preach the Gospel to his whole household.

I share this story of Cornelius as an example of the kind of godly man that is so much needed today – family man, spiritual guide and leader, faithful husband, and example of Christ-like living in his community.

In this month, let us give thanks to the Lord for godly men and women, husbands and wives, and families following the Lord Jesus Christ in love and service to their neighbors. People who live under the unchanging values of God our Father and Creator, Jesus Christ His Son and our Savior, and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier and Dispenser of the Gospel and Sacraments – within the Church as the Bride of Christ the Bridegroom, the perfect marriage and family! Soli Deo Gloria!

Blessed Thanksgiving to all!

Pastor John Telloni

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

"Stepping Up" Consecration Sunday is November 24, 2024!

Consecration Sunday is scheduled for November 24th, 2024, at the 10:00 a.m. service. At St. John's Lutheran Church, we believe that God would like us to approach CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP from a biblical perspective rather than merely a way to pay our bills. We believe that our financial contributions can be a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting our church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes. To assist you in determining what percentage of your income God is calling you to give, a **Percentage Giving Chart and Commitment Form is available on the table in the Narthex.**



This year the Stewardship Board is encouraging your participation and requesting that our members prayerfully consider "stepping up" their giving by **2 – 3%** as an willing act of discipleship. This moderate increase will help us fund and prayerfully exceed the 2025 budget, which was recently approved at the last voters meeting. The Commitment Forms will be collected on Sunday November 24, 2024, with our aim being to help people building their relationship to God and to support our ministry here at St. John's in Massillon.

May your thankfulness and trust in the Lord be reflected in your Stewardship!

- Board of Stewardship – Luther Russert, Chairman

THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE



The annual Thanksgiving Eve Service will be held on Wednesday, November 27th, at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Carpenter will deliver the sermon, and Pastor Tellni will serve as Officiant/Liturgist. The Sacrament of the Altar will be offered, and the Adult Choir under the direction of Dr. Lewis P. Porter will sing a seasonal anthem.

Come and give thanks to our gracious God for a blessed year and a blessed tomorrow. It is always good to thank and praise the Lord for His goodness and mercy!

May our sanctuary be filled with grateful voices as we also will be filled with His presence and gifts in Christ through His holy Word and Sacrament! Join your brothers and sisters in Christ at His banquet table for the greatest Thanksgiving feast!

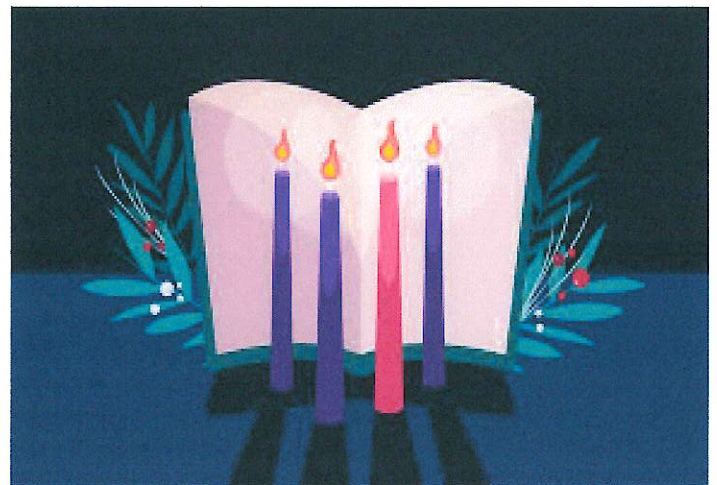
MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES

Midweek Advent Services will take place on Wednesday, December 4th, 11th, and 18th.

Two service options will be available: 12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m. Pastor Telloni will conduct the Noon service, and Pastor Carpenter will conduct the evening service.

An Advent theme has not been determined as of this date. Special Advent Devotional Booklets, courtesy of Lutheran Hour Ministries, will also be made available for your daily devotions.

Special Note: On Saturday, November 30th, at 9:00 a.m., Altar Guild members and any volunteers are invited to decorate the church in preparation for the Advent season: wreaths and bows, banners, Advent Wreath, the Jesse tree, and the setting up of the two holiday trees. No training required.



OUR LEADERS IN 2025

CHURCH COUNCIL

Cal Shunk, Chairman; Frank Pershing, Vice-Chairman; Debbie Stocker, Secretary; Treasurer (finances overseen by the Stewardship Board; Pastors Telloni and Carpenter, Ex Officio; and the Chairpersons of the Boards.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARDS

Elders: Cal Shunk; Steve Marker; Dennis Lillich; and Russ Ryder
Stewardship: Luther Russert, Chairperson; Denise Ryder; and Barbara Leffler
Education: Rosemary Sedjo, Chairperson; Rachelle White; and Dr. Lewis Porter
Outreach: Mary Kay Pershing, Chairperson; Jason Kompara; and Shannon Carpenter
Trustee: Steve Marker, Chairperson (appointed); and Dan Rohr

NEW COMMUNION PROCEDURES

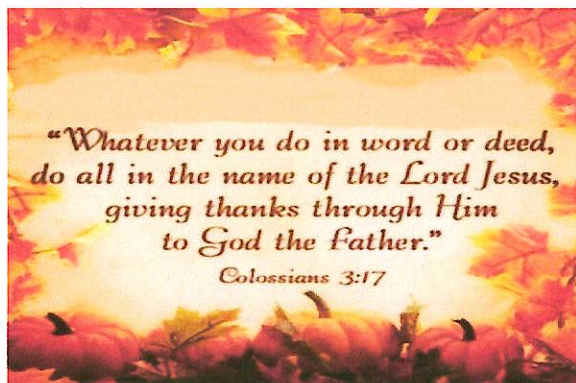
The practice of offering both Common Cup and Individual Cup has resumed in the Divine Service. The revised procedure is as follows:



Worshippers on the left side of the sanctuary will commune first, and after they commune, worshippers on the right side will be directed to commune next. Please walk up the aisle to the baptismal font to receive the Host

(bread) from Pastor Telloni, and then approach Pastor Carpenter if you prefer the Common Cup or go directly to the stand with the Individual Cups (*you do not have to wait to move to either station for the wine*). After receiving the blood of Christ in either Common or Individual Cup, you may proceed down the side aisle back to your pew. An Altar Guild member will assist Pastor Carpenter in ensuring he has enough wine in the Common Cup during distribution.

Another change is that the pastors, lay server, and Altar Guild member will commune after all worshippers have done so. Otherwise, a "continuous" distribution will continue, and the ushers will give you assistance if needed.



FUNERAL



It has pleased Almighty God to call to Himself the soul of Ronald Gemma, who passed away on Monday, October 28, 2024, at the age of 64. Calling hours will be held at Paquetel Funeral Home on Sunday, November 3rd, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The Funeral Service will be held here at the church on Monday, November 4th, at

11:00 a.m., Pastor Telloni as Officiant and Preacher and Pastor Carpenter as Liturgist, with committal at Rose Hill Memorial Park Cemetery in Jackson Township. We express our sympathy to his wife, Linda, his mother, Dori, and daughter and son-in-law, Candace (Justin) Carter, grandson, Bentley, and extended family and friends, praying that our gracious God will comfort them with the sure hope and peace of Jesus Christ Who is the Resurrection and the Life!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

meets from 8:45 - 9:45 am in Room 109, led by Mary Kay Pershing. Lessons usually are based on the Gospel of the day.



SUNDAY ADULT BIBLE CLASS

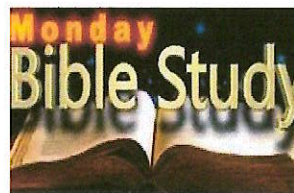
meets in Rooms 112-113 from 8:45 to 9:45 am. TOPIC: Pastor Telloni is leading the discussion on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans," which contains the theology and strategy for the mission of the Christian Church for every generation to which Paul and all the apostles were committed as they carried out Jesus' Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations!" All are welcome.



Sunday Morning Adult Study

MONDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS

meets every Monday from 10 - 11:30 am in Rooms 112-113. Topic led by Pastor Telloni is "Clarity and Hope in the Midst of Persecution," based on "St. Paul's 1st and 2nd



Letters to the Thessalonians." St. Paul's writes two "fatherly" letters to the new church he founded during his second missionary journey in a time of persecution to comfort and encourage them in the love and hope of the Lord Jesus Christ. A timely subject for all in these troubled times, especially today when church membership across our country is in decline! Feel free to join us!

NEW MEMBERS



We welcome Jason & Lena Kompara and their children, Charlotte, Alexander (“Anders”), Graham & Olivia; Mary Owens; Scott Pry & Karen Mobberly, into St. John’s family of faith via Profession of Faith, who were received on September 29th. After the service, a New-Member Reception Potluck Luncheon was held in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks to all who brought covered dishes, and the Martha Society whom provided the breaded chicken!

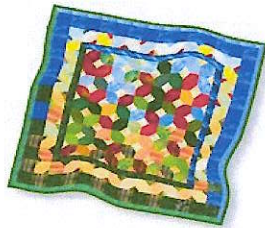
THANKSGIVING FOOD SLIPS

are available on the table in the narthex. *We encourage you to pick up a few slips that have food items written on them for the non-perishables needed for the annual Thanksgiving Food Distribution to families in our area.* Deadline for bringing in food is Sunday, November 10th. Elders are in charge of this ministry and will be given to 10 families on Sunday, November 24th. *Thank you for your support!*



ST. JOHN QUILTERS

meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9:30 am - 2:30 pm. *Bring a lunch!* If you like to quilt and are willing to serve others in need by making quilts and bed coverings, etc, please see Janet Dyer or Jeanette Tennant. *Donations of monetary gifts for shipping and supplies are always welcomed!* 5 quilts were blessed on October 16th by Pastor Telloni and were delivered to families in North Carolina to them as part of the ongoing Hurricane disaster relief efforts.



THE MOBILE SNACK COMMITTEE



delivered 18 treats provided by Jeanne Urbas. Our baker for November is Karen Mobberly. Thanks to our drivers: Gene Stocker, Dennis Lillich, Rose Sedjo, Dennis Brown & Deb Stocker. If you would be willing to prepare the dessert for the month or deliver the snacks, please see Deb Stocker or Rosemary Sedjo. We will mobilize again on Wednesday, November 27th.

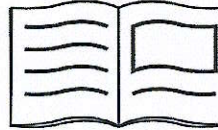
SCOUT TROOP PEPPERONI ROLL SALE!

Scout Troop #257 is selling pepperoni rolls beginning November 19th through January 14th. The order forms will be made available on the table in the Gathering Place. You may place your order form and money in Rick Ott’s mailbox. Orders will be available for pick up approximately the last week of January. Thank you for your support! - Rick Ott, Scout Liaison.



LUTHERAN WITNESS SUBSCRIPTION

The cost per annual subscription has increased to \$20.70. However, it is less expensive to subscribe through the SELC District than directly from synod’s Concordia Publishing House. *Deadline for renewing or subscribing is Sunday, November 10th. Subscriptions will not be received in the Church Office after the deadline! Please turn your form into the church office* (Forms provided in the bulletin).



CHRISTMAS MARKETPLACE

(Gifts to encourage our future pastors and deaconesses)

In the weeks before Christmas break, the Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Food & Clothing Co-op holds the annual Christmas Marketplace, a time for refreshments, fellowship, and gifts for our students before they return home for the holidays.



Alongside their families, these men and women pick out a quilt sewn by the ladies of LWML and congregational members from every corner of the country, and they look forward to receiving gift cards for their use throughout the year. *If you would like to buy gift cards for the students and their families, a list of merchants and gift card increments is located in the Gathering Place next to the gift box to place your cards in. Deadline to bring in gift cards is Sunday, November 17th.*

‘Not to Depart ... a Finger’s Breadth’

Unconditional Subscription to the *Book of Concord*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Lutheran *Book of Concord* is a treasure. But if its content is not living and lived, it’s only an old book. As I’ve noted, our Confessions are entirely concerned with the Gospel of free forgiveness in Christ, offering certainty regarding the Gospel and the great comfort and consolation of the consciences of believers. In fact, the word “conscience” appears on almost every other page. Because religion is, above all, a matter of conscience, and especially a matter of a good conscience, the *Book of Concord* delivers the certainty of God’s love in Christ by teaching about justification by grace through faith and the delivery of forgiveness in the Word proclaimed and read, in absolution, in Holy Baptism and in the Lord’s Supper.

Our LCMS holds a “*quia* subscription” to the *Book of Concord*. That means we subscribe to the Confessions *because (quia)* they are a faithful exposition of God’s Word, not merely *insofar as* they contain the Word of God. And so all of our churches, all of our pastors, teachers and workers swear not to depart from the Lutheran Confessions. All of our confirmands and laity vow to uphold this Lutheran faith, most simply known and confessed in Luther’s Small Catechism. A pastor, a congregation, even a church member may be removed for attacking the teachings of the *Book of Concord*. Why? This book confesses the truth as it is given in God’s Word. And that truth of the Gospel is the greatest gift and consolation in the world. I won’t be part of a church that can willy-nilly yank biblical certainty away from me or my loved ones based on a single pastor’s varying predilections. I want a pastor and a congregation sworn to uphold the truth of the Scriptures, and that means the truth of the scriptural assertions of the *Book of Concord*.

Dr. C.F.W. Walther wrote extensively about this:

Is it fully in accord with the spirit of our Symbols to demand an unconditional subscription of the servants of our Church? I respond: There can be absolutely no doubt about this. The Conclusion of the Augsburg Confession reads: “Only those things have been recounted whereof we thought that it was necessary

to speak, in order that it might be understood that in doctrine and in ceremonies nothing has been received on our part against Scripture or the Church Catholic” ([Augsburg Confession, Conclusion 4&5;] *Triglotta*, 95). The same thought is stated in the Foreword to the Formula of Concord regarding the Augsburg Confession: “To this Christian Augsburg Confession, so thoroughly grounded in God’s Word, we herewith pledge ourselves again from our inmost hearts; we abide by its simple, clear, and unadulterated meaning as the words convey it, and regard the said Confession as a pure Christian symbol, with which at the present time true Christians ought to be found next to God’s Word; just as in former times concerning certain great controversies that had arisen in the Church of God, symbols and confessions were proposed, to which the pure teachers and hearers at that time pledged themselves with heart and mouth. **We intend also, by the grace of the Almighty, faithfully to abide until our end by this Christian Confession,** mentioned several times, as it was delivered in the year 1530 to the Emperor Charles V; and **it is our purpose, neither in this nor in any other writing, to recede in the least ... from the oft-cited Confession, nor to propose another or new confession**” (*Triglotta*, 847; “Introduction to the Formula of Concord”). (In the Latin original it says ... not to depart even a finger’s breadth.) The same thing is expressed in the Preface to the Book of Concord also of the other previous Symbols, regarding the

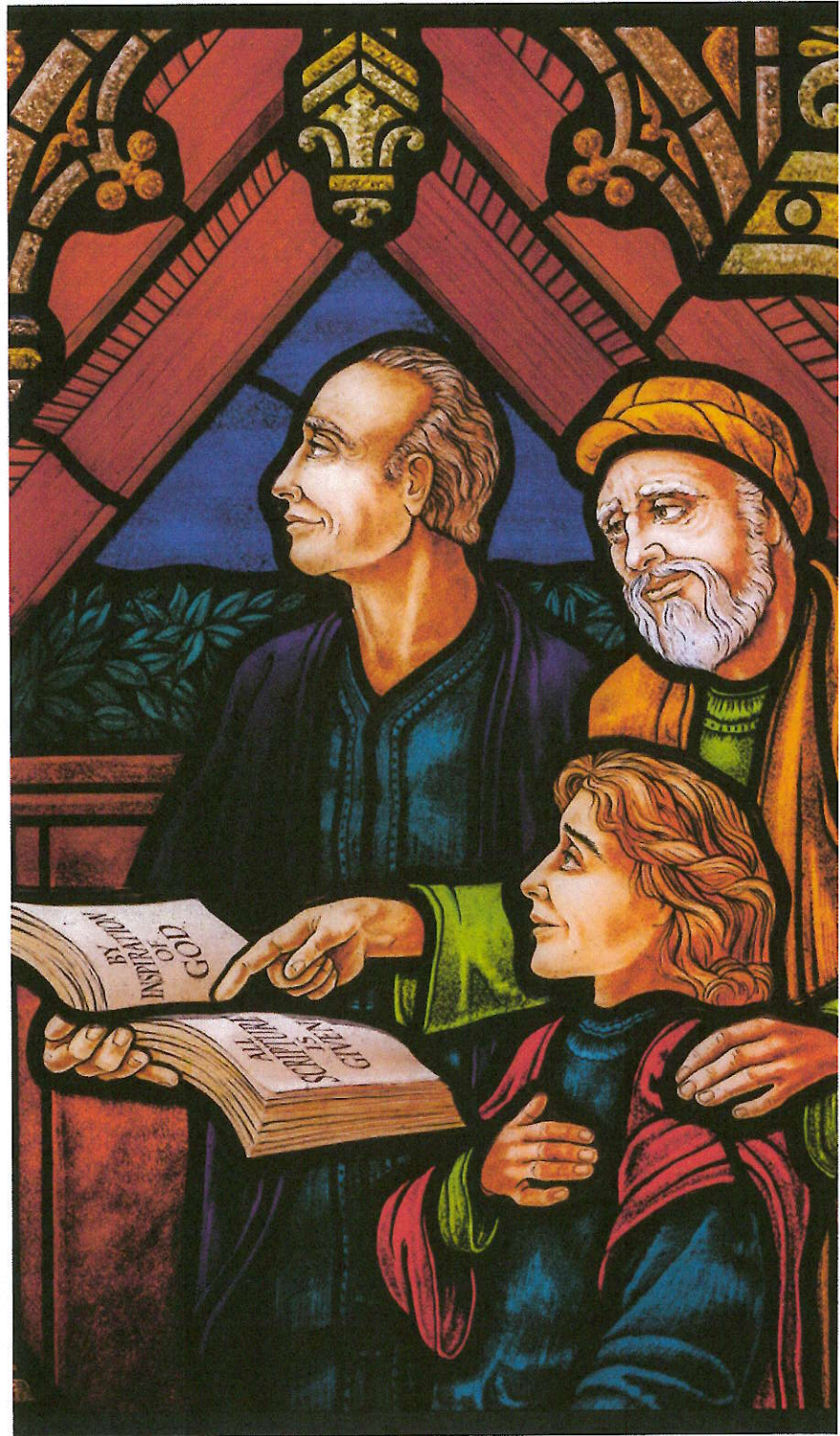
Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and both catechisms, when it says there: “Therefore we also have determined not to depart even a finger’s breadth ... either from the subjects themselves or from the phrases which are found in them ... but, the Spirit of the Lord aiding us, to persevere constantly, with the greatest harmony, in this godly agreement, and we intend to examine all controversies according to this true norm and declaration of the pure doctrine.” (*Triglotta*, 23)

Finally, the Formula of Concord designates all the previous **Lutheran Confessions** as “**a unanimously accepted, definite, common form of doctrine, which all our evangelical churches together and in common confess, from and according to which, because [not insofar as] it has been derived from God’s Word, all other writings should be judged and adjusted as to how far they are to be approved and accepted**” (*Triglotta*, §55; FC SD Rule and Norm 10).

All these quotations clearly show that **our Symbols themselves demand an unconditional subscription**, and he who wants to subscribe conditionally denies what the Symbols themselves demand.¹

Thanks be to God for generations of Lutherans who have held fast to these Lutheran Confessions and to the truth of God’s Word that they articulate so clearly. Thanks be to God for the pastors, congregations and church members across our dear Synod who continue to hold them fast and to live in them. Thanks be to God for our confessing church.

— *Pastor Matt Harrison*



¹ C.F.W. Walther, “Answer to the Question ‘Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers, and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church?’” trans. A.W.C. Guebert, Matthew C. Harrison in *At Home in the House of My Fathers* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 131–32. Emphasis added. Reprinted with permission.



by Liv Booth

HOMES THAT CONFESS

How Our Daily Lives Proclaim That God Is for Us

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ount Laundry has grown into the Great Western Laundry Range, and even if I level it today, it will grow back almost instantly. I try to get on top of the repetitive stuff, but it seems like I'm going round in circles and getting nowhere. As I get older, the circles feel faster. Another Christmas comes around, and I think, "Didn't we just do this?" Yes, we did. We live in cycles. And as

Christians, we can confess through our homes that God is *for us* right here in the cycles of life.

The core of our Lutheran faith is the love of God *for us*, given us through incarnate means — physical things. At the rail, you hear “given and shed *for you*, for the forgiveness of your sins” as you open your mouth like a little baby bird to receive Him. At the font, you were “sealed on the forehead and on the heart as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.” As you make the sign of the cross, remembering your Baptism, you remember also the Lord’s life-giving embrace which enfolds you — the real you, who is tired of going round and round, completing tasks that only have to be done again.

The Lord invites us to see our mundane cycles as part of His bigger story of creation, redemption and resurrection.

But like a morning glory vine whipping up a pole to flower in the sun, my circles make a spiral, a pattern made by the Lord to bring me closer to Him, daily closer to my real home. Jesus lived in our life cycles with us. He woke and slept, got dirty and washed, made and spent His money. He who set the solar system in motion designed us to live in cycles, and He lives them alongside us now, leading us up and up, round and round, to flower in the sun.

The Lord has been inviting us to loop through the year with Him since He gave Moses a pattern of fasts and feasts for the people of Israel. He invites us to see our mundane cycles as part of His bigger story of creation, redemption and resurrection. As the Israelites walked through the yearly rotation of fasts and feasts, they felt the cycle of suffering, promise, preparation, longing, fulfillment and rejoicing. This religious cycle repeated the story of God's kindness — and in turn, sanctified their earthly orbits. Their repeated everyday tasks became confessions of God's love as they kept the fasts and feasts.

Likewise, our homes can confess that God is for us when we root them in the Church Year. The church's seasons provide us with countless practical, physical elements to confess that life, hope and a future are for us. Lived inside the great cycle of the Church Year, even the rise and fall of Mount Laundry can become liturgical.

How? The Church Year and the daily practices of the faith help us notice Christ's presence in our daily lives, encouraging us to engage all our senses, reminding us that this spiral ride is carrying us up toward our final home.

A good place to start is the act of brief, repeatable prayer, acknowledging the Lord's loving presence marked by physical daily events, confessed in physical (aloud is helpful) words. You may feel all kinds of uncomfortable at first! I fall prey

to the lie that these practices are only for Super Christians, not me. Ask the Holy Spirit to fight this lie for you. There are no "Super Christians." "It's too late; I should already have done these practices. I won't do them consistently. There will be times I just don't want to." Realize that faltering in our prayers is itself part of the cycle — it's even mentioned in our rite of private confession. The Lord knows we won't keep any practice faithfully. But He is faithful, and that's the point. It's never ever too late to watch Him being faithful as He guides our vines growing up and up, around and around.

Pick up your *Lutheran Service Book*, or download the InPrayer app from CPH. Or start with something even simpler! We all wake up — say a "Glory Be,"¹ no more. We all eat lunch — say an "Our Father." We all go to bed — say Luther's Evening Prayer. Each of these pauses, tied to a physical event, can confess that God is for me. The Order of Morning Prayer reminds me that every day is a new day, in Christ. Morning and evening happen anyway; why not confess that the Lord is for us by beginning and ending our day with the sound of Matins and Compline? Sitting down is an act of faith, confessing with my body that the Lord is, in this moment, for me.

Next, join Christ in the dance of the Church Year. Check the front of your hymnal or the amazing resource *Treasury of Daily Prayer*. There's something for every day of the year: a church season, a feast or remembrance day, a Scripture reading, a whole section of hymns that align with the cycle.


¹ "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen."

Each church season comes with a color. Try putting that color on your table, or in your window, or

The Church Year and the daily practices of the faith help us notice Christ's presence in our daily lives.

as your phone wallpaper. In my kitchen, I have a corner shelf with a crucifix, a candle, the names and baptismal birthdays of my godchildren, some pictures of people I love, and something in the color of the season. My shelf continually confesses that God is for me, while I take out the trash — again.

The purple of Lent will remind you to slow down and think of Jesus preparing for His great sacrifice for you. The green through summer and fall will remind you that the Holy Spirit is growing you at His own pace just as He grows His church. Watch your home parallel the church cycles, and you might more often notice that Christ is in your home just as He is in the church. The feasts might mean more to you when you embrace the anticipation. Try keeping your palm frond from Palm Sunday until next Ash Wednesday, and then burn it. The Advent wreath (invented by Lutherans, to keep the record straight) is a great way to mark the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah about to be fulfilled — *for you!*

Immanuel is for us in our cycles — laundry, dishes, morning, Advent, sin, evening, Easter, repentance. Up and up we go, round and round with Jesus who is *for us*. The very repetition that drives me crazy can confess that God is for me, and *for you.* 

LIV BOOTH is a member of St. John Lutheran Church in Cañon City, Colo. She is a co-founder of Signpost Inn Ministries. Her book *Not Home Yet: How to be human in an inhuman world*, co-written with husband Brandon, is available at signpostinn.org/store.